THE CBS RADIO NETWORK

FIRST LINE REPORT

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RATHER: First Line Report. News and analysis. Dan Rather, CBS News, the White House. Good mor ing. Rethinking the unthinkable. After this.

(ANNOUNCEMENT)

Lee Harvey Oswald, the man who shot President Kennedy. Did he ever know or have contact with E. Howard Hunt or Gordon Liddy or any of the others in that mysterious and dangerous crew convicted in the Watergate crime? And under investigation still in connection with a series of other criminal acts including burgularizing homes, offices, and embassies? What about Sirhan Sirhan, the assassin of Robert Kennedy and James Earl Ray, the killer of Martin Luther King, and Arthur Bremer, the man who shot George Wallace? Did Hunt or Liddy or his strange Cuban contacts, did any or all of them know any of these people? If so, how and how well. Under normal circumstances, and in more normal times, these questions would not be asked. Unfortunately for us all, circumstances a far from normal. These are not normal times. Among people on the street, among people far remo ed from the elite strata of politics and with no stake or ambition in partisan politican macinations, the questions are there, wandering the backroads of their minds. Especially about the assassination of President Kennedy. Doubts long have nagged. The Warren Commission concluded on t basis of evidence and testimony available at the time that Oswald and probably Oswald alone fired at President Kennedy. No conspiracy was the conclusion. Please pardon the personal reference, b it seems advisable in this instance, that this reporter was in Dallas when Kennedy was shot, followed closely the Warren investigation, conducted for CBS News and with CBS News' full resources and independent investigation, then and ever since this reporter had defended the Warren Commissi and its conclusions. However, it occured at the time, to this reporter and to others that the Warren Commission may have made a mistake in closing completely its investigation. The question was asked them why could not the investigation be open-ended? Why could at least a skeleton inve tigatory staff be left? It was admittedly by all concerned, a close decision, but President John son, Chief Justice Warren, the Kennedy family, all decided that it was best for the country and f the case to end the Warren Commission, its investigation and its reporting. We know now and did know then that President Johnson was never finally absolutely convinced that Oswald acted complet alone. Mr. Johnson apparently wasn't because his friend John Connally also wounded in the shooti of President Kennedy said he wasn't absolutely convinced. Now the old sores, the old doubts, the old questions and some new ones are being reopened. Oswald's involvement with anti-Castro Cubans What was supposed to have been his mystery appearance in Mexico City. The possibility of contact with people who had CIA connections. Hunt and Liddy's involvement with anti-Castro Cubans. Thei CIA connections. These just a smattering of the kleidoscope of so far as we know unrelated coinc dences, unproved allogations, and down right rumors that sweep through and boggle the minds of people who try to think straight about what has happened. No right thinking person wants to be i responsible. That is part of the reason people who think about it might talk about it little. Another part of the reason is fear. Fear of opening further all those old doubts and suspicions. But fear of the truth is not an American trait. Perhaps it isn't time to re-open the case of the Kennedy assassination, or any of the others in any formal way. It may be, however, that someone somewhere in authority already is asking quietly, investigatively, some of the tough questions about characters such as Hunt and Liddy and their Cuban contacts and whether they had at any time any connection with Oswald, Sirhan, Ray, or Bremer. Now, please, this message.

(ANNOUNCEMENT)

This is Dan Rather reporting on First Line Report from CBS News.